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# Jelinek: Republicans Protected School Funding

## *Senator refutes State Superintendent's rationale for current school funding shortfall*

LANSING – Sen. Ron Jelinek, R-Three Oaks, issued the following response to State Superintendent Tom Watkins' criticisms of Republicans' longstanding commitment to full funding of Michigan's foundation grant for public schools:

"Superintendent Watkins' couldn't be more wrong about the measures Republicans took to protect school funding. Because of the 'creativity' Mr. Watkins criticizes, Republicans were able to preserve the foundation grant intact. The alternative to this 'creativity' was to fund schools at a lesser amount – no one's preferred choice. In fact, until Governor Granholm announced her cuts this week, there never has been a cut to the foundation grant during Republicans' watch in the Legislature and Governor's Office, only increases.

"I will remind Mr. Watkins that the solutions to preserve the foundation grant were embraced by all, Republicans and Democrats alike. We all wanted the same thing for our kids: a commitment to keep the per-pupil funding intact. All of us had hoped Michigan's economy would improve sufficiently enough to allow us to do that. What has created the shortfall in the School Aid Fund, as any experienced observer of the state budget process will tell you, is the economy, not our valiant attempts to keep our promise to Michigan's students and their parents."

Jelinek is chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on K-12 Education. Watkins criticized Republicans in a recent memo to public school administrators.